POST-EVENT SUMMARY REPORT
FOR 2005 WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING

Name of Event: Report to the Town of Colonie Supervisor from the Colonie Senior Network Advisory Board

Date of Event: June 8, 2005

Location of Event: The Douty Senior Center at The Beltrone Living Center
Six Winners Circle, Colonie, New York 12205

Number of Persons Attending: 75

Sponsoring Organization: The Colonie Senior Network

Contact Names:

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Please follow this format for each priority area, with the most important listed first. **Please ensure that your organization's name and contact information is provided at the bottom of each page submitted.**

Priority Issue #1: Transportation

Barrier(s): Lack of awareness of senior driving issues in the community. While seniors are reluctant to give up their car keys they may also be averse to taking driver improvement classes for fear of failing or they feel they already know how to drive. Roadways and intersections are often not "senior-friendly."

Proposed Solution(s):

1. Work with community partners such as police and municipal departments of transportation to educate them on senior transportation and driving issues. This includes making traffic signs more readable and intersections better marked. It also includes educating police officers about recognizing signs of Alzheimer's disease or dementia and other aging issues that effect driving, i.e. macular degeneration. It is

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also important to provide them with information and materials for appropriate referrals.

2. Work with community partners to promote safe driving programs to upgrade skills in a non-threatening environment to reduce the fear of having their keys taken away.

3. Utilize the expertise and safe driving programs from AAA and AARP.

Priority Issue #2: Information – getting seniors and their families to access information to prevent or delay situations from becoming a crisis.

Barrier(s): Seniors and/or their families do not access information until there is a crisis situation. If information about programs and/or services is accessed earlier many crisis situations can be prevented or at least delayed.

> *Example: A senior lives with their adult children but is home alone all day. Because of this isolation they cling to family members when get home, causing resentment and guilt in the adult children. The isolation and lack of social interaction may also cause more rapid mental and physical deterioration causing the adult children to believe that the only possible answer is a nursing home.*

A better course would have been to seek activities for the senior to engage in during the day, such as a senior center, adult day care or senior club. These alternatives are known to help maintain, and even improve, mental and physical capabilities, thus eliminating or delaying the need for nursing home placement.

Proposed Solution(s):

1. It is essential to reach out to seniors and adult children of seniors continually, putting the information out there constantly using a multi-media approach, varying the format for the same message.

2. To reach adult children set up "brown bag" presentations at employers, not only are you educating the employer about available services, you are educating the adult children of the current senior population who are also the Baby Boom generation who will soon become seniors themselves.

3. Develop a community network of providers. By reaching out and developing a network, communities can avoid duplication of effort. By supporting collaborations within the network a "seamless" system of services can be delivered. And, most importantly, by cultivating the network, member organizations are able to provide

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information on where to access services because they are aware of what other member organizations do, regardless of their own population served.

Example: In a school, staff will be able to direct questions about senior services because, as part of the network they are made aware of where to access which services.

4. An advantage in reaching the Baby Boom generation is the Internet, a very high percentage is computer literate and Internet savvy. Enhance your website to appeal to Baby Boomers and seniors alike.

Priority Issue #3: Housing

Barrier(s):

1. Convincing municipal planners that there must be a variety of housing options available for the Baby Boom generation. Some seniors will want to stay in their own home others in senior housing or in maintenance free condominiums; some will want to be in age specific communities, others in age blended communities.

2. Seniors who desire to stay in their own homes will require an array of services to enable them to do so. These services include a serviceable transportation system, access to a range of in-home assistance such as home-delivered meals, assistance with home repairs, yard work, meal preparation, shopping, etc.

Proposed Solution(s):

1. Communities should work with their planning department/board on their comprehensive plans, providing input on senior needs and issues.

2. Communities should encourage developers to build senior friendly communities.

3. Communities should encourage the development of senior-friendly services to enable them to stay in their own homes, create a network of service providers both for profit and nonprofit to collaborate of how best to fill the gaps in service.

Priority Issue #4: Shortage of Healthcare Workers

Barrier(s): Although seniors are living longer, there is also a large population of ailing seniors who require the services of a healthcare worker.

Proposed Solution(s): While the Baby Boom generation is predicted to be healthier than their predecessors, they will need healthcare workers to assist in managing their health. To help them manage chronic conditions such as arthritis, diabetes and osteoporosis we suggest placing prevention and wellness programs throughout the community in locations

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where seniors can easily access these programs: senior centers, churches, schools, etc. Development of local community access channels with prevention and wellness programming can also teach seniors skills, activities and modifications to help cope with chronic conditions.

Enclosures:

Program Binder (via USPS)

1. Event Power Point Presentation
2. Event Handouts:
   a. Slide Handouts
   b. Colonie Senior Network Strategic Plan
   c. Community Development Survey & Summary of Results
   d. Older Adult Survey
   e. Older Adult Survey Results
   f. Website Information
   g. Event Exit Survey
3. Colonie Senior Network Resource Guide
4. Colonie Senior Network Brochure
5. Media Coverage:
   a. Press Releases
   b. Articles: Colonie Town Times, Daily Gazette, Times Union
   c. Senior Connections

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